

So we say goodbye to Sister Dorothy and, again, honor her memory by continuing to do what we can in our lifetimes to continue in her great work.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that an article that appeared today in the Des Moines Register by Rekha Basu regarding Sister Dorothy be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Des Moines Register, Jan. 30, 2008]
BASU: DUBUQUE NUN TAUGHT US TO STAND UP FOR BELIEFS

(By Rekha Basu)

At 88, Sister Dorothy Marie Hennessey of Dubuque was arrested for trespassing on a U.S. military base. She'd been protesting a school reputed to train Latin American military members to repress democracy advocates. Noting her advanced age, the judge offered her the option of staying under house arrest in her convent.

"I appreciate your thoughtfulness," replied the diminutive nun. "But I am not an invalid. I'd like to have the same sentence the others have."

So Sister Hennessey began her six-month prison term (the maximum sentence), along with 25 others, at the Federal Correctional Institution in Pekin, Ill. She was allowed to take her hearing aids, but not her Bible.

The woman dubbed "the radical nun," the activist who in her 70s walked across the country to protest the Cold War, died last week at age 94—and the planet is poorer for it. We lost a passionate champion of peace and justice who, even while protesting war and injustice, maintained an unflinching sense of optimism.

"I consider it a spiritual commitment because I've learned in my almost 70 years in the convent that God is a compassionate God who loves all of us," she once said, "but who also loves the poor and the people who are oppressed."

Though she was a giant in every way but physically, Sister Hennessey's name wasn't a household one in Iowa. It should be. She earned a place in both the Iowa Women's Archives and Wikipedia, was written about in the New York Times and was interviewed on PBS. And with her biological sister Gwen, also a Franciscan nun, she was awarded the Pacem in Terris Award from the Davenport Catholic Diocese in 2002, earning a place among such luminaries as Daniel Berrigan, Cesar Chavez, Desmond Tutu, Martin Luther King Jr. and Mother Teresa. The award is named after a Papal encyclical by Pope John XXIII that calls upon people of goodwill to bring peace among nations. It recognized the sisters for "living out the Gospel through their work on behalf of the poor and for peace."

The oldest of 15 children, Sister Hennessey was born in 1913 in Manchester and raised on a farm. She spent 75 years at St. Francis in Dubuque and taught in various Iowa communities and in Portland, Ore.

It was her brother, the late Ron Hennessey, a longtime missionary in Latin America, who first inspired her social activism. His letters from Guatemala and El Salvador in the 1980s told of terrorism and killings of Mayan Indians in his parish by Guatemalan death squads. Brutal wars in Central America were being waged using American guns and money.

A friend of Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador, Father Hennessey wrote of witnessing the Salvadoran military firing on mourners in the cathedral after Romero's assassination.

Sister Hennessey centered her protests on the Army's School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Ga., because it trained Latin American soldiers and police. The school said it gave them a professional education. Protesters said it taught torture. Graduates from the school were later implicated in the 1989 murders of six Jesuit priests and two women in El Salvador. The protest that sent Sister Hennessey to prison involved a mock funeral procession. The school was closed a month later, but it reopened under a different name.

In an interview from prison in 2001 on PBS "Religion and Ethics," Sister Hennessey told host Bob Abernethy, "I feel that it's our duty. We can't protest everything, but we can pick out some of the worst things to protest, and that's what I've tried to do."

Fortunately, her sister remains to carry on the family legacy.

Sister Hennessey taught many things, including courage, compassion and the importance of independent thought and creative action.

She taught that aging gracefully can be compatible with living meaningfully, and even dangerously. But most important, she taught that we don't have to stand by in frustration when wrongs are perpetrated, even by our government; that the world is best served when we stand up for what's right. And that you do whatever you can from wherever you are.

In her case, it was the Lord's work.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASEY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, what is the pending business before the Senate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business.

FARM BILL

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues in the Democratic leadership to move forward with the 2007 farm bill. Last July, the House of Representatives passed the 2007 farm bill by a vote of 231 to 191. Last December, the Senate followed suit by passing its version of the 2007 farm bill by a vote of 79 to 14. Certainly there are controversial provisions in each bill that must be addressed as we move forward. However, the bipartisan support for these bills is overwhelming. In fact, with 79 votes, this Senate-passed farm bill received more votes than any farm bill in the past 30 years.

Unfortunately, little progress has been made since that time. The respective chairs of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees need to focus on naming conferees and working together to reconcile their differences. Right now, my understanding is both chairs have been meeting with the administration, both saying they are making

no headway. It seems to me that ultimately we need to work in a bipartisan manner to resolve the differences between the House and the Senate versions of the farm bill, and that begins by naming conferees to a farm bill conference committee. We only have 6 weeks left to name conferees, reconcile the Senate and House-passed farm bills, and deliver a farm bill that meets the needs of America's producers and can be signed into law by the President.

Additionally, in March, the Congressional Budget Office will issue a new baseline for agricultural programs. On account of high prices and a successful agricultural industry, the CBO will likely predict that few farm payments will be made in the coming years. The result is that Congress will have even fewer dollars to write the new farm bill, which will further magnify our current budgetary issues associated with this farm bill.

Our farmers and ranchers are already making their planting decisions for this spring. Many are wondering what regulatory regime will impact their operations. Will it be the 2007 farm bill—now the 2008 farm bill—which Congress and the Agriculture Committees have been debating for the past 12 months? Will it be the 2002 farm bill which has served our producers well but expires in 45 days or will it be the 1949 and 1938 farm bills, which are the last farm bills with permanent authorizations?

In recent days, some have threatened to let the 2002 farm bill expire and revert to a permanent farm bill policy which was drafted almost 60 years ago. The two laws that would govern most farm programs passed in either 1938 or 1949 are what we refer to as permanent law. If Congress fails to approve new legislation that would set aside those permanent laws, and if Congress also fails to extend the current farm bill, then these two old laws once again become operational.

Now, among other things, permanent legislation would require USDA to establish acreage allotments and marketing quotas for price-supported crops and for producers to vote whether to approve quotas. Some agricultural producers actually might benefit from the permanent farm bill, while other producers in our conservation programs would dramatically suffer. If you are a wheat grower, the loan rate for wheat would be \$8.32. That is something a lot of wheat growers would probably like to see. Corn loan rates would be \$4.12, and, of course, there would be no countercyclical or direct payments that we have in the farm bill that we are operating under today, and no support program for soybeans under the permanent farm law we would revert to—the 1938–1949 laws I referred to—if, in fact, we don't take action to either extend the current farm bill or get the new one passed.

Milk purchases by the Commodity Credit Corporation would be established at \$28.20 per hundredweight, far

more expensive than provisions in the 2002 and 2007 farm bills. Most conservation programs would also expire on March 15 of this year, 2008, including the CRP. If conservation programs expire, no new acres could be signed up by producers.

I call on the leadership—the Democrat leaders are the ones who get this process rolling by naming conferees and allowing the process to move forward, but I think that both sides, frankly, need to put aside any bickering and fingerpointing that is going on and move forward with a farm bill process that will enable us to get a bill, a signable bill on the President's desk before March 15 when the current farm bill expires.

Moving forward on the farm bill debate requires a few critical steps. First, as I said before, there has to be an announcement and naming of farm bill conferees, and that should happen immediately. Conferees need to begin meeting to iron out policy differences between both bills and to come to an agreement on funding. As the conferees do that, and the committee works, then they can negotiate in good faith with USDA in an attempt to reach an agreement on a bill the President could sign. Congress then could pass the bill, get a conference report, move it through the House, move it through the Senate, and get it on to the President for his consideration.

Our agricultural producers, our conservation organizations, our school nutrition groups, our renewable energy sector are all waiting patiently for Congress to work its will with this farm bill. The time for action is now. We simply cannot afford further delay.

Probably the most frequently asked question when I am back in my home State of South Dakota as I travel around the State is: When are we going to get a farm bill? Are we making any headway on the farm bill? When is the conference going to meet on the farm bill? Agricultural organizations that come here to Washington to visit pose that same question, because they have every reason to believe that based on the action that was taken by the House and the Senate last year, this conference committee process would be underway and we would be well on the way to getting a new farm bill enacted. We can't afford to wait any longer. We have farmers and ranchers who are depending upon us, who are relying on us to make good decisions and good judgments and to get a bill passed that will serve the purposes of promoting agriculture, making us globally competitive, and in the years ahead.

I simply urge my colleagues in the leadership—and again, my assumption at this point is, of course, that the reason we haven't gotten conferees named is for some reason the leadership—the Democrat leader, perhaps—doesn't want to name conferees. I think the same thing is happening on the House side. My understanding is House conferees have not been named either.

This process cannot move forward until that happens.

Now, I am told too that there is a belief that we have to get this worked out with the White House or the administration before conferees can begin to meet. That is simply, to me, the reverse of how this ought to work. Chronologically, Congress has to act before we can put a bill on the President's desk for his consideration and ultimately his signature or veto. So Congress has to do its work first before the administration can do its.

I have some concerns, based upon comments that have been made by the administration, about their intentions with regard to the farm bill. There have been veto threats hanging over this bill. I think that would be a big mistake. I will convey that in no uncertain terms, and have, to members of the administration. The administration is raising a couple of issues about how the bill is paid for. They don't like the way the bill was paid for in the House, which included a tax increase. I accept that. I think that would create big problems here in the Senate as well. But the financing mechanisms that were used by the Senate, many of them are financing mechanisms that had been proposed by the administration in previous budgets submitted to Congress. So it seems to me at least we can work through that issue. They would like to see additional reforms in the area of payment limits. Until we get the conferees together and start meeting and working out these differences, none of this is going to happen.

To get this process jump started, we need to have conferees announced and named and get the process moving forward again with an eye toward a March 15 deadline that if we don't meet, we are going to put our producers in a very precarious position relative to their decisions they have to make about this new planting year and, furthermore, jeopardize a lot of programs that are in this farm program that are so good, not just for agriculture but for the rural economy and arguably for our national economy.

The conservation title in this farm bill includes programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program, the Wetland Reserves Program, the Grasslands Reserve Program, the EQIP program. Some of the best environmental policy that we do as a Congress is found in the farm bill. If we don't take action by March 15, that conservation title would expire and no producers could be enrolling in those programs.

The energy title in the farm bill is a tremendous policy with regard to promoting advanced biofuels, the next generation of biofuels. We have had great success in agriculture with corn-based ethanol.

It has been a wonderful story, a remarkable story, frankly, of what our producers can do. We are already at about 7 billion gallons of ethanol. In my State of South Dakota alone by the

end of this year, we will be producing 1 billion gallons. The two largest ethanol producers in the country are headquartered in South Dakota.

We have taken the policies that were put in place in the 2005 farm bill—the renewable fuel standard and other incentives—and used them to grow an industry that not only is expanding the economic base in rural areas, but it is accomplishing a major policy objective that I think we all share, and that is reducing our dependence on foreign sources of energy.

All those energy provisions in this new farm bill which provide financial, economic incentives for the development, commercialization, and research into cellulosic ethanol will all be lost if we cannot get a new farm bill enacted, and that would be a tremendous loss not only, again, for agricultural areas of this country that can benefit economically from the production of renewable energy, but it would be a tremendous loss as well to our Nation as we strive to get less dependent on foreign energy and become energy independent.

For all those reasons, this bill needs to move forward and needs to move forward now, but it starts simply with the naming of conferees. As I look at the calendar, we are already almost to the end of January. We will have a break over President's Day in February. Pretty soon March will be here. March 15 is the deadline. Typically, when you have a bill that is 1,000 pages long, such as the Senate-passed farm bill, it has to be reconciled with the House bill. Even though there are many similarities, there are differences between the two bills that will have to be worked out. As a consequence, it is going to take a certain amount of time for the conferees to sit down and reconcile and iron out those differences. Then, of course, the conference report has to go back to the House and Senate for final approval and adopted by the House and Senate, and then we have to get it down to the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue for consideration by the President, hopefully a signature on that bill.

We are talking about 6 weeks for all that to happen. That would be a record in terms of congressional time when it comes to processing, deliberating, and acting on legislation, but it cannot get started until conferees are named and both House and Senate conferees agree to sit down and schedule some meetings so we can move forward with this process.

I am very concerned about this situation. As I said, I don't think there is a day that goes by when I am back in my State of South Dakota—and it doesn't matter where I am in my State—that I am not running into somebody who is impacted by the farm bill. In many cases, it is producers, farmers, and ranchers, and they are very anxious because they are probably most directly dependent on the policies we put in place in the farm bill. The conservation community, those interested in

wildlife habitats—Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, groups such as that. We have an extraordinary program in South Dakota that has benefited the economy enormously by creating recreational opportunities, hunting opportunities, and it all comes back to having the right kind of habitat and that comes back to conservation policy that is in place in this farm bill.

As I said, anybody who is connected to the renewable energy industry, the nutrition programs, this farm bill has a very broad reach in terms of who it impacts. It is not just about farmers and ranchers, it is about renewable energy, it is about conservation programs, it is about nutrition programs.

As a consequence, the ramifications of our lack of action are very far reaching. I am very hopeful this will happen and happen soon. But I wanted to come down here this evening and convey to my colleagues in the Senate and to the leaders the importance of this happening and happening in a very short order.

I again suggest the leadership appoint conferees and the conferees begin to meet and let's get this train moving forward.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FOOD INSECURITY

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, we are the wealthiest nation in the world. Yet American children go to bed hungry, and American seniors choose between food and medicine, between food and heating their home. American families stand in line at food banks stretched too thin to serve them.

There is a term for what millions of Americans face every day. It is called food insecurity. It means children are not getting the food they need to grow up healthy in too many cases. It means mothers and fathers foregoing food for themselves so they can feed their kids in too many cases. It means seniors who are rationing their food to one meal a day in too many cases.

I stood on this floor as long as a year ago telling the story of Rhonda Stewart who testified in front of the Agriculture Committee about food stamps. Ms. Stewart has a 9-year-old son. She has a full-time job, she is president of her local PTA, she is involved in the Cub Scouts for her son, and she teaches Sunday school. Yet she is squeezed at the end of every month because her food stamps simply do not go far enough. She gets about \$6 a day from food stamps. The average food stamp in this country is \$1 per person per meal. She told me that early in the month,

she makes pork chops for her son because that is her son's favorite meal. They might do that once or twice early in the month. By the middle of the month, maybe the second or third week, she said she takes her son to a fast food restaurant, once, maybe twice. But at the end of the month, she often sits at the kitchen table with her son as he eats. She sits there not eating, and her son asks: Mom, is there something wrong? Are you sick? She says: I just don't feel like eating tonight. She runs out of food month after month.

Food insecurity, not having enough food, to put it bluntly, affects one in six seniors in this country. Our Nation letting children and seniors go to bed hungry is as shortsighted as it is heartless.

An hour and a half ago, from 6 o'clock until about 7 o'clock, I was in a call with more than two dozen people in Ohio who run food banks and food pantries from all over the State. Let me tell you some of the things they told me.

They told me they have pretty much about the same amount of dollars to run their food pantries as they had a year ago or 2 years ago or 3 years ago. A woman by the name of Tina Ossa in southwest Ohio, generally a pretty affluent part of the State—Butler County, Claremont County, that area—said she is running out of food in part because the cost of frozen chickens—she used to be able to buy a tractor trailer load of frozen chickens—has gone up almost 50 percent. She said a tractor trailer load of egg noodles has doubled in cost in the last year or so whether they are buying it wholesale or buying it directly from the food manufacturer.

Others told me on this call that the food banks are always sort of the last stop, an emergency safety net. The food stamp benefit is limited to \$1 per meal per person. The cost of energy to heat their home has gone up. The cost of going to work has gone up with the cost of gas at \$3 a gallon. And the last emergency stop for so many people is to go to a food bank because it is a safety net. Yet these food pantries are running out of food.

One food pantry told me typically this time of year they have 1 million pounds of food on hand. Now they have 400,000 pounds of food on hand. The lady, Ms. Ossa from Fairfield, OH, in Butler County, told me she started that food bank in 1983. It has never been close to as difficult a situation as today. They are getting fewer donations partly because the Government has not stepped up and partly because the people who have given to them—charity—in the past, who have given dollars for food, are hurting themselves and not as likely to contribute or contribute as much.

She said the companies, the supermarkets and food manufacturers, are more efficient and squeeze any waste out of their system. Any slightly damaged cans, any kind of items they

might have given to a food bank before they are not doing so. They are more in tune to Wall Street and the bottom line, so they are less likely to give these charitable contributions.

One person on this call from Cleveland said there is a large bank in Cleveland where a woman at the bank organized other employees for a dress-down Friday. You can wear jeans on Friday if you give \$5 to a local food bank. It has raised significant dollars for the food pantry as a result.

The husband of this woman who organized this drive at this major bank in Cleveland lost his job. She is now barely making it. They together are barely making it. The father-in-law has moved in because he has had problems, and she now is going to this food bank. She is a full-time worker with a good job in Cleveland, and she is going to this food bank because she cannot make it.

There is story after story. The most amazing story took place in Logan, OH, in the southeast, probably the most hard-hit Appalachian part of the State. It looks a lot like the area of the Presiding Officer in western Pennsylvania. This is southeastern Ohio.

In Logan, OH, on a cold day in December 6 weeks ago, people began to line up at 3:30 in the morning to get food from this food bank which opened at 8 o'clock. By 8 o'clock, cars were snaked all over the city streets in the town of Logan, a county of about 30,000 people. At 8 o'clock, they opened the door. By 1 o'clock in the afternoon, 2,000 people had been to this food bank, in a county of 30,000; 7 percent of the residents in this country had gone to this food bank, and many had driven 20 and 30 minutes to get there because it is a rural, pretty spread-out county.

I might add, Mr. Dick Stevens who runs this food bank told me that probably half of those beneficiaries who visited that food bank at the United Methodist Church in Logan, OH, were employed. Imagine that: You work hard every day, you play by the rules, you work as hard as any of us who dress this way in this institution do, many harder in some cases, you are working hard for your family, involved in your community, and you have to go to a food pantry to get enough food to make it through the week. Something is wrong that we in this body allow that to happen.

Another person involved in food pantries told me 90 percent of the people who come into food banks in Warren County, an affluent county straight northeast out of Cincinnati, the first county out of Cincinnati, 90 percent of food bank recipients are employed. In some places, it might be 30 percent employed or 90 percent. The fact is, nobody who has a full-time job ought to have to go to food banks, especially since those food banks, in most cases, are giving enough for 1 week, not 2 or 3, and they don't let them come back as often because they are running out of food. They have the same amount of